

NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

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ADMINISTRATION OF CHLOROFORM.—*The Medical Record* says: In the *Münchener Medizinische Wochenschrift* a suggestion in regard to the use of this anesthetic is made by Haun. He has found that simply warming the bottle from which the agent is being dropped by setting it in water kept at about 100° F. greatly facilitates the induction of narcosis and diminishes the amount of the drug required. The patients also recover consciousness more quickly and suffer less from the ordinary after-effects. This he explains on the assumption that cold chloroform vapor is to a large extent deposited in the nasal and upper air passages without ever reaching the alveoli or being absorbed from these. Instead it is very gradually taken up, often even after the operation is completed, and serves to produce many of the disagreeable sequelæ so frequently observed. The warm vapor, on the other hand, can penetrate readily to the deeper parts of the lung and practically all of it reaches the blood promptly and effectively. This suggestion is hardly new, but is not generally followed, although so simply carried out.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF RADIUM IN DERMATOLOGY.—*The New York Medical Journal* has the following: Wickham and Degrais (Proceedings of French Medical Congress, in *La Clinique*, in treating cases of tuberculosis of the skin with radium, succeeded, by commencing with short exposures and gradually prolonging them to seven or ten hours, in obtaining smooth, soft cicatrices in cases of tuberculosis of the skin, in cancrroid of the skin, vascular nævus, and in a pulsatile tumor of the forehead in an infant six months old. Photographs were also presented in support of the value of radium in practice of dermatology.

TAPE MEASURE FOR ACCURATE MEASUREMENT OF CIRCUMFERENCES.—*The New York Medical Journal*, quoting from a German contemporary, says: Wahl has adjusted a catch through which the tape

measure passes and is then placed about the limb the circumference of which it is desired to accurately determine. The tape is drawn firmly about the limb and the catch marks the measurement.

CANCER.—*The Practitioner* says: Copeman, of London, in his Guthrie lecture, reviews some of the recent research work in cancer. His conclusions are as follows:

1. That cancer is to some extent preventable.
 2. That cancer is not, in the ordinary sense, an infection, there being no evidence that its onset and continued growth is due to any recognizable microörganism.
 3. That cancer constitutes the local manifestation of perverted body metabolism, an indication of which is afforded by the failure of the normal HCI secreting function in the mucous membrane of the stomach.
 4. That temporary amelioration of symptoms, with or without obvious retardation of growth, has been obtained in a certain number of instances, as the result of treatment of one and another kind; but
 5. That in the present state of our knowledge early and complete operative measures, where possible, afford the only satisfactory method of treatment at our command.
 6. That, nevertheless, cancer occasionally disappears spontaneously, the tumor ceasing to grow and eventually becoming absorbed.
 7. That, consequently, there is reasonable hope that continued investigation and research may afford accurate knowledge of the conditions favorable to such spontaneous cure, and further that the indications thus afforded may eventuate in the discovery of a method of treatment specific for this disease.
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SUBCUTANEOUS INJECTIONS OF AIR AS A MEANS OF RELIEVING CERTAIN PAINFUL MANIFESTATIONS.—*The Medical Record*, in a synopsis of an article in *The British Medical Journal*, says: A. S. Gubb's experience is based on seventy-seven cases of sciatica and several cases of neuritis of the brachial plexus. The summarized histories are given of nine cases of sciatica. In nearly all of them excellent results were obtained. The pumping apparatus consists of the double-bulb arrangement familiar in the Paquelin cautery. Its capacity should be known. The air is pumped through a glass bulb containing sterilized cotton, and enters the tissues through an irido platinum needle carefully sterilized. The skin over the painful area having been sterilized, the needle

is inserted through the skin, and as soon as it is evident that no vessel has been punctured, the insufflation is commenced. A rounded swelling forms around the seat of puncture, and when the air reaches a vascular or nervous sheath it rapidly spreads along it, and secondary swellings may form at a distance. These secondary ramifications are specially apt to form in the limbs, where the sheaths are more numerous. The skin at first becomes blanched, but this soon gives place to a pronounced redness, which persists for some hours. The air takes several days to undergo complete absorption, and under the influence of muscular contraction travels far and wide, so that the characteristic crepitation of "surgical emphysema" may be felt at spots distant from the seat of the original injection. No pain whatever is experienced, even when comparatively large quantities of air are injected, at most a sensation of distention, "pins and needles," or pin pricks. Cutaneous sensibility is at once diminished, the skin becoming more or less numb. The needle having been withdrawn and the puncture sealed by a drop of collodion, the next step is to massage the part. The subcutaneous air must be alternately dispersed and brought together again, especially over the painful spots. This massage is an indispensable part of the procedure, and must be conscientiously carried out; indeed, patients should be directed to repeat the process daily as long as any resonance remains. It is believed that the foregoing procedure causes elongation of the finer nerve ramifications, where they leave the subcutaneous tissues to enter the derma proper.

WILL RADIUM CURE CANCER?—A. C. Haven reports in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, a case of recurrent cancer of the scar tissue after hysterectomy treated with success by the introduction of a small tube of bromin of radium into the vagina where it was retained by a tampon and left over night, being removed in the morning. For the first six months of this treatment the results were discouraging; the disease progressed and extended, causing great pain, the inguinal glands enlarged, there was great weakness and mental depression and the disease culminated finally in a terrific hemorrhage. After this had been controlled and the bleeding granulating tissue curetted away, a change set in for the better, at first slow, but surely continuous, marked by less pain, less need of morphine, and fewer hemorrhages. The enlarged glands became smaller, weakness and depression disappeared, and healthy scar tissue replaced the cancerous granulations. At the end of six months no trace of the original disease remained, and the patient was to all appearance well. The vagina had contracted so that the little

finger was introduced with difficulty. Later in the year a hard swelling appeared in the rectovaginal septum, which, when opened, discharged a grumous, sanguineous substance, analysis of which was negative. This recurred several times the next year, but finally completely healed. Now, two years and a half after the hysterectomy, the patient is apparently strong and well. Haven thinks that there can be no possible doubt as to the nature of the growth; it was pronounced cancer by competent pathologists. He thinks that the method of using the radium and the persistence in the treatment under discouraging conditions very probably had their influence in bringing about the apparent favorable result, and that failure in other cases may have been due to discarding the remedy too early.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIMITATION OF PUERPERAL INFECTION.—*The Annals of Gynecology*, quoting from a contemporary, has the following: Dr. James E. Davis says that statistics concerning puerperal infection are said not to present the actual facts, which are really worse than supposed, some estimates being that from 10 to 15 per cent of the deaths occurring in women during the period of sexual activity were due to "child-bed fever." The routine use of gloves is one of the most important considerations in preventing infection. It is with the genitalia of some patients as with the hands of some practitioners—the personal equation is almost insurmountable. There is no nursing of either the professional or non-professional type, that so inadequately copes with serious responsibilities as does that of obstetrics.

BICHLORIDE TABLETS.—Dr. F. D. Canfield, of Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada, observed that a number of valuable instruments in his instrument cabinet were becoming rusted beyond use or repair, especially those nearest a glass bottle with a cork stopper containing the usual bichloride tablets. The bottle was tightly corked. Upon removing the bottle from the cabinet the process of rusting at once stopped. These tablets had been there some months. It would be interesting to find out, writes Dr. Canfield, to what extent do bichloride tablets deteriorate with age. And, says the author, may not the use of old tablets explain how some surgical wounds have late infections, as described in the article Microscopic Traumatic Gangrene, in *The New York Medical Journal*.

EPITHELIOMA AND X-RAYS.—*The New York Medical* in an abstract of a paper in *The Lancet* says: Schiff's conclusions are as follows: 1.

The favorable effect of Röntgen rays on epithelioma is indisputable. 2. But Röntgen ray treatment must not be considered in a category by itself, but must be looked on as an alternative or as an addition to other methods. 3. The success of the Röntgen ray treatment depends upon biological differences in the various kinds of epithelioma. 4. To aid the effect produced by the Röntgen ray treatment small operations may be done and the cautery applied according to the nature of the case. 5. In those cases in which no favorable influence is produced by the Röntgen rays at the latest after the fourth or fifth sitting, this treatment must be discontinued, as little more is to be expected from it. 6. The intervals between the single sittings must not be too long; a more active Röntgen light—medium, soft tube—with, of course, a careful covering of the healthy parts of the skin, is to be continued. 7. In the case of surgical operations a subsequent application of rays is eventually desirable. 8. It is of especial importance to lay stress on the fact that by the application of Röntgen rays the patient is saved from an operation, and the result produced by Röntgen ray treatment is not only equally good as regards the cure, but much better as regards the subsequent appearance.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF "VACCINE."—*The Maryland Medical Journal*, quoting from *The Charlotte Medical Journal*, says: The terms "vaccine" and "vaccination" do not apply satisfactorily to the new treatment of disease by injection of killed bacteria, pursuant to the discoveries of Sir A. E. Wright, for strengthening the opsonic or resisting properties of the blood. A Philadelphia physician Dr. David Riesman, suggests in *American Medicine* the new names "bacterine" and "bacterines," corresponding with vaccine and "vaccines," "bacterinate" for "vaccinate," and "bacterination" for "vaccination." "Any or all untoward symptoms that might follow bacterination might be designated by "bacterinia," he adds. Dr. Riesman formulates the objections to the old terms for the new use as follows:

1. On etymologic grounds—the word "vaccine" being derived from vacca—a cow.
2. On the ground that vaccine and vaccination have a specific connotation based on the Jennerian principle.
3. On the fact that vaccination is a prophylactic measure, while the injection of dead bacterial cultures is used principally for curative purposes.

REVERSAL OF MEDICAL OPINIONS.—*The Maryland Medical Journal* says: Reversal of opinions is characteristic of the history of medicine,

and cannot be better illustrated than by this new knowledge as to the winter improvement of the tuberculous. Time and again has it been necessary for the profession to change its methods of treatment to the opposite of long-established orthodox practice. The old plan was to keep the tuberculous outdoors in summer and house them in winter or send them south. Now we expose them to the northern winter and protect them from the sun in summer. It is time to investigate the benefits of the solarium and see if it is not as harmful as the summer sun.

MEASLES AND RUBELLA.—*The Medical Record*, abstracting a paper in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, says: The frequent errors of diagnosis between measles and rubella are remarked by H. M. McClanahan, who describes their respective symptoms as observed by him during a recent prevalence of both simultaneously in Omaha. The principal differences observed were the marked prodromal symptoms of catarrhal disorder, fever, etc., with the early appearance of Koplik's spots in measles as compared with the slight or absent prodromata in rubella, and the later appearing, more lasting and confluent eruption in measles. The papules in rubella are more discrete and they appear often as the first noticeable symptom. The fever is not so high as in measles and complications are notably absent. In three of his patients he had the opportunity of observing both disorders occurring in the same patient within a few weeks and noting the contrasting symptoms and course. There are doubtless borderline cases, but careful examination will usually lead to a correct differential diagnosis.

BACTERIOLOGY OF WHOOPING COUGH.—*The Interstate Medical Journal* says: Albrecht reports the results of his investigations of this subject, to the Vienna Medical Society (*Rev. Mens. des. Mal. de L'Enf.*).—His work is based on a study of two hundred autopsies on children dying of pneumonia, consequent on whooping-cough, and on the study of the expectoration in seventy cases of whooping-cough. In all of these cases there was constantly found the bacillus pertussis of Eppendorf. Albrecht thinks that this bacillus is not to be distinguished in any way, either morphologically or biologically, from the bacillus of influenza, and it would seem that we could say that the same bacillus can produce both diseases. Furthermore this bacillus seems to play an important rôle in measles, because Albrecht found this bacillus in 80 per cent in all fatal cases of measles. By inoculation of guinea pigs, Albrecht has succeeded in obtaining a serum which agglutinates this

bacillus in a dilution of one to four hundred. The inoculated animals presented more or less marked myocardial lesions, and at times there were produced vegetations on the mitral valve.

· WHOOPING COUGH.—*The New York Medical Journal*, in an abstract of a paper in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, says: Kilmer reports the results of treating five hundred and fifty cases of pertussis with an abdominal belt, the results being, as the author says, surprisingly good. The belt is made of linen, with a strip of silk elastic webbing two inches wide inserted on either side. This is sufficient to give the belt elasticity, yet does not add materially to its weight. The belt laces in the back, and, by means of the lacings, any degree of constriction may be maintained; it is worn over the undershirt or band. The width should approximately be as follows: For infants, four to five inches wide; for children, five to eight inches wide. The length of the belt should be such that when complete it should measure three inches less than the circumference of the abdomen at the navel. The degree of constriction should be determined in each individual case; usually a slight degree of constriction is sufficient to produce a moderation of the cough and a complete cessation of vomiting. If, after having applied the belt, the symptoms do not abate, tighten it slightly. A sense of comfort is generally expressed by children who are old enough to make themselves understood. These belts can be made by any instrument maker at a few hours' notice; the usual mode of procuring them in any individual case is to send the measure of the circumference of the child's abdomen (at the navel) to the instrument maker, also stating the age of the child, and in twenty-four hours' time a belt is ready for application. The belt is best applied by the attending physician, and the parents and nurse should be instructed in its use. The cost of the belt is nominal, from one dollar and a half to three dollars being charged for its making. The beneficial results obtained show that 87 per cent of patients wearing the belt are helped by its use.

OBSTRUCTION IN THE NOSE OR THROAT AS A CAUSE OF NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASES IN SCHOOL LIFE.—*The Medical Record* says: R. H. Johnston regards the real nature of mental and nervous troubles in these cases as toxic from a deficiency of oxygen in the inspired air. The list of symptoms produced includes mental dullness, restlessness, night terrors, nocturnal incontinence, headaches, stuttering, and various other defects of speech, choreic movements of face, etc. Mention is made of reflex nervous cough, irritability of disposition, pseudomeningitis, etc.